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COUNTRY: Austria

SUBJECT: Suspicious Activities of Lt. Col. Szankay

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PLACE

ACQUIRED: Austria, Innsbruck

GRADING OF SOURCE: F

SOURCE: A former Hungarian politician.

1. On 21 March 1953, a former Hungarian Lt. Col., Szankay (fnu), arrived in Innsbruck on a mission which caused some interest and much suspicion. Szankay has been living for several years in Brussels, Belgium. He is 56 years old, slim and tall, and had never worked for intelligence while in Hungary. In 1952, however, he appeared repeatedly in Austria and was quite obviously trying to organize some intelligence network against Communist Hungary. He made contacts with former intelligence officers, who of course had already been engaged by some Western intelligence. Pretending to be a newspaper reporter, he tried to obtain Hungarian news from them, even if they had already been reported to some Western intelligence unit. He paid in dollars quite generously for such services and admitted to a friend that he was working upon instructions from a Western intelligence outfit. At that time, the assumption prevailed that he was working for the British. He was well supplied with funds and gave dinners and gifts in a lavish way.
2. Lt. Col. Szankay again arrived in Innsbruck in March 1953. He stayed at the most expensive hotel, the Europa, where his bill for five days amounted to 900 schillings. He visited a former friend and told him that he was now in charge of a world-wide intelligence organization, that he had abundant funds at his disposal, and asked his friend to quit his modest job and accept work from him. He offered \$600 salary a month, besides 500 schillings a day, when he was sent on a trip. He stated that within a few days he would have to fly to Ankara, where he had never been before, and that he will set up there intelligence lines against the Soviets. Before arriving in Innsbruck, according to his story, he had visited Paris, London and Madrid.
3. Lt. Col. Szankay advised his friend that if he accepts the above-mentioned offer, he would have to live from next summer on in Belgium, from where he will direct certain intelligence lines. Lt. Col. Szankay is a naive and, as far as intelligence work goes, a rather inexperienced soldier. His private secretary is a Hungarian journalist, Mr. Hevesi, who speaks and writes three languages perfectly, and who receives a comparatively high salary in Belgian francs. In view of all these efforts, Szankay's friends in Innsbruck feel convinced that Szankay is not working for the British, but might be connected with US intelligence.

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